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HISTORY
OF THE
CHURCH IN SILVER STREET.

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THE
HISTORY

OF THE

CHURCH IN SILVER STREET,

LONDON,

DELIVERED AT THE

LAYING OF THE FOUNDATION STONE

OF THEIR

New Chapel,

IN

FALCON SQUARE,

ON THE SEVENTEENTH OF MAY, MDCCCXLII.

BY JAMES BENNETT, D.D.

PASTOR.

LONDON:

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1842.

William Hallford
from
Miss Eliza Robinson
March 7. 1878

NOTICE.

IF the excursive nature of the following sketch demands an apology, the reader should be informed, that to embody the substance of what was delivered extemporaneously, after laying the foundation of the New Chapel, was the aim of the writer; as this was the request of the audience, which led to the present publication.

Some additional information is, however, inserted, especially concerning the Presbyterian Church, which preceded the Congregational, in Silver Street; for the limits of the time allotted to this part of the service made it necessary to abridge what had been prepared.

For more enlarged acquaintance with the general history of the Non-conformist churches, the reader must be referred to Neale's History of the Puritans; Calamy's Non-Conformist's Memorial; Wilson's History of Dissenting Churches in London; Bogue and Bennett's History of Dissenters; and Bennett's History of Dissenters during the last Thirty Years.

HISTORY

OF THE

CHURCH IN SILVER STREET.

THAT infinitely glorious Being, in whose comprehensive view past, present, and future are all assimilated, but not confounded, has taught us, by the inspired narratives of his Word, that the former history of the Church may eminently contribute to its present prosperity and future duration. As, then, the whole is made up of its parts, may we not hope that what has long been proved true of the universal church, may still hold good when applied to one humble member of that august body for which the world stands? Particular history is, indeed, less grand and imposing than the theme of the historian by emphasis; but, being more definite, in proportion as it is more limited, while the minor story may with greater ease be grasped and retained, local interests create, also, strong individual attachments, and awaken pleasant reminiscences seldom enjoyed by those who range over a wider space.

Assemblies of the faithful have, for nearly two hundred years, been held in that central part of London called Silver Street, leading from Wood Street into Falcon Square and Aldersgate Street. The place of worship, originally erected for a Presbyterian congregation, was, in consequence of the persecutions of those times, hidden from view in what was called Meeting House Yard, and held as the private property, probably, of one of the members of the society; because, until the passing of the Toleration Act, the possessions of a dissenting congregation were not legally secure. Previously, however, to the Revolution, Charles II. granted to this congregation, under his own hand, a license, which was, for many years, kept framed and suspended in their vestry.

It is not certain whether the *building* was erected immediately after the fire of London, when the silenced non-conformists began to preach again to many of their former flocks, whom the conflagration had deprived of the parochial buildings; or whether the passing of King Charles's indulgence, in 1672, encouraged the society to provide a place of worship.

The *congregation*, however, was collected, soon after what has been called Black Bartholomew's Day, by Dr. Lazarus Seaman, one of the two thousand ministers ejected from the establishment by the Act of Uniformity. He had held the living of Allhallows, Bread Street, and his charge now consisted chiefly of his

former hearers, by whom he was justly held in high esteem. He died in Warwick Court, Newgate Street, in September 1635.

He was succeeded by Dr. Thomas Jacomb, the ejected incumbent of St. Martin's, Ludgate, who died at the house of the Countess of Exeter, in Little Britain, on the 27th of March, 1687. These Presbyterian ministers were eminent for ability and learning. The library of the former was sold for seven hundred pounds, and that of the latter for thirteen hundred; equivalent to what would now be thought an immense sum for a private collection. But the ejected ministers were the *élite* of their day.

John Howe, A.M. was the next pastor; but as he was an Independent, and demands special notice, we shall devote to him some pages at the end of this historic sketch.

Daniel Williams, D.D., who bequeathed to the Dissenters the library in Redcross Street, was, for a short time, assistant to Mr. Howe.

John Shower, having been before invited, now removed from the care of the English Church at Rotterdam, to assist Mr. Howe, and so high was the estimation in which this writer on Eternity was held, that it used to be said, two such men as Shower and Howe were too much for one congregation. They ought, indeed, to have spread their usefulness over a much wider space; of which Shower seems afterwards to have been convinced.

Thomas Reynolds, having finished his studies in Holland, occupied the place of assistant-preacher in Silver Street, from which Mr. Shower removed. In a short time, however, Mr. Reynolds, too, changed his sphere, and became an eminently useful minister of the congregation at what has been called the Weigh House, as it was a place of worship built over the King's Weigh House.

John Spademan, though the son of an ejected minister, was, at first, a Conformist, holding the living of Swayton, in Lincolnshire. But conscience compelling him to quit the establishment, he went over to Rotterdam, where, as pastor of the English Church, he was held in great esteem by foreign divines. After the Restoration he became colleague, and in 1705, a short time before his death, successor to Mr. Howe. Mr. Spademan was also tutor to the Seminary for the Ministry in Hoxton Square; where he was succeeded by Capel, called Capellus, who had been driven, by the revocation of the edict of Nantz, from the chair of Hebrew in the University of Saumur. Thus early the non-conformists began to provide for a succession of learned ministers.

Samuel Rosewell, A.M., was the son of that pastor, at Rotherhithe, whose trial has contributed to brand Judge Jefferies with the epithet of the execrable. After assisting Mr. Spademan at Silver Street, and joining with the celebrated Dr. Grosvenor, in the Lord's day

evening lecture, at the Old Jewry, Mr. Rosewell's valuable labours were abridged by an illness, of which he died on the 7th of April, 1722, at the age of forty-two.

Jeremiah Smith followed, and was noted for the part he took in the Trinitarian controversy of that day; of which his "Doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity" is an honourable proof. He ceased from his labours on the 20th of August, 1723.

Daniel Mayo, A.M., after having studied under the celebrated Witsius, and preached to different congregations, succeeded Mr. Smith. He was one of Dr. Doddridge's earliest patrons. He departed this life on the 13th of June, 1733.

Thomas Bures was the last pastor of the Presbyterian congregation; for at his death, in October 1747, the change occurred which brings us to our proper theme—

THE HISTORY OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

At the reformation from Popery, corruptions which had silently accumulated during the lapse of ages were suddenly assailed and overthrown, as by an earthquake. In our country, however, guilty instruments naturally produced the imperfect results of this religious revolution, which leave us to glory in little more than that religious liberty, which rose out of the chaos, to throw off eventually every

incubus, purge away all impurities, and bring back the religion of Jesus to a condition which will answer his original idea, and accomplish his benevolent design.

Though the earliest reformers were naturally, and we may almost say justifiably, engrossed with the doctrines which are essential to salvation, those who followed were led on to the discovery that the discipline of the church equally needed to be restored to the divine model, in order to secure the efficiency and perpetuity of those truths which had been rescued, like a half-stifled body, from the ruins of a fallen house.

In this career, the honour of the initiative must be assigned to the Presbyterians. Conceiving that a dominant prelacy had at length generated Popery, and, familiarising the church to the idea of one minister ruling over many, had taught it to bow to one Pope domineering over all; the Continental reformers generally maintained that all ministers were equal in rank—the bishop and the presbyter being but two names for the same office, viewed in different lights. To Presbyters, therefore, they committed the government of the Church, in conjunction with certain lay officers, called ruling elders. Instead of a gradation of rank among ministers, was introduced a succession of church courts, commencing with what the Scotch call the Kirk, or Church, Session, consisting of the officers of a single congregation ;

advancing to a Presbytery, composed of those who belong to several adjoining flocks; rising to a synod gathered from a whole county; and terminating in a general assembly of the representatives of the national church. This form prevails among the Protestants of Switzerland, France, Holland, Scotland, the middle states of America, and in the north of Ireland. The celebrated reformer, Calvin, has added to it the lustre of his name.

Presbyterianism, at one time, aspired to be the permanent established religion of England, and to become almost identified with Protestantism; for when the Long Parliament, in 1643, summoned an assembly of divines at Westminster, to consider the affairs of religion, the great majority were Presbyterians, who would have established their system with all the force of law.

This consummation was, however, prevented by five members called the dissenting brethren,* and afterwards known as Independents. If it be asked, how came this minority thus to differ from those with whom, in so many points, they cordially agreed, we answer—the arrows of persecution overshot their mark, as when the grand enemy of Christian liberty instigated the Jews to crucify the Lord of Glory. For they who fled from the

* Their names were Bridge, Burroughes, Goodwin, Nye, and Simpson; but the Scotch commissioners speak of some ten or eleven Independents in the synod.

cruelties of Archbishop Laud were kindly received in Holland, where they became Independents; as their predecessors had become Presbyterians by fleeing to Geneva, from the persecutions of the Popish Queen Mary.

The germ of the new principles, previously sown in England by one Brown, had been rendered in a great measure abortive, by his inferior character, and his denunciation of all societies that rejected his views. But when superior men found themselves in a foreign land, they calmly reviewed the whole question of ecclesiastical discipline, compared what they had seen in their own country with the foreign Protestant churches which were Presbyterian, and tried them all by the word of God.

They arrived, therefore, at this conclusion—that Christ, the only legislator of the church, had neither appointed a Pope to govern the whole, nor diocesan bishops to rule other ministers—nor Presbyterian courts to control congregations—but had made each assembly of the faithful a church, with authority to manage its own spiritual affairs, the pastor being the true scriptural bishop; and the pecuniary or temporal concerns being entrusted to deacons, who were not ministers of the Word, but chosen, as well as the pastor or bishop, by the suffrages of the church*.

* Robinson, one of their number, having, in a Latin declaration of their faith and order, employed the adverb

The door being opened by Providence, the refugees returned to their native land, confirmed in these views by a practical proof of their effects. Some of them, being called to the Westminster Assembly, opposed the design of compelling the whole nation to submit to the Presbyterian discipline. As Independency was the parent of religious liberty, and Toleration, having been for ages unknown, was thought intolerable, it was denounced, as “the great Diana of the Independents.” The prejudiced world took its best friend for a deadly foe, that would reduce both church and state to a Babel of confusion; concluding that no nation could exist where every one was left at liberty to think and act for himself in religion—accountable to God alone.

But, through torrents of reproach and storms of persecution, the rational, benign, and Christian principle has been working its way to victory and triumph universal. Where is now the man of sense who will venture to argue against religious liberty? Who will not confess, that, as civil government cannot answer for our souls, at the day of judgment, it should not dictate to our consciences in this state of probation? Its proper province being the good order of society, those who peaceably obey the civil

independent, to express the right of each church to manage its own affairs independently of foreign control, they were called Independents by others; though they themselves prefer the term Congregationalists.

laws ought not to be burthened with ecclesiastical impositions, but are entitled to all the advantages of the social state, while, acting upon their own views of faith and worship, they leave to others the same liberty which they claim for themselves.

From the passing of the Toleration Act, the first charter of religious liberty, imperfect as it was, our country dates its peace and prosperity. No more revolutions; no emigration of the religious to foreign lands, except on voluntary missions to extend the sway of "the glorious gospel of the blessed God." Even those who adopt other religious views, now gladly repose under the sacred shade of the tree which Independents planted, and watered with their tears and their blood. The adherents of Rome itself are silent on the right, or at least the expediency, of coercing conscience, and sometimes utter faint whispers in favour of the liberty which they justly enjoy.

But by what magic could a few men provide for this triumph, amidst an opposing assembly of the mightiest minds which our country has produced? The diminutive fraction was a mighty host; for the native metal had been, by the fire of persecution and the blows of its hammer, converted to steel. The Scotch Presbyterian commissioners to the Westminster assembly, confessed the skill, the courage, and the perseverance, with which the advocates of independence and liberty baffled the efforts of

those who would have shewn the truth of Milton's words—"New presbyter is old priest, writ large." The force of truth soon brought numerous accessions to the determined band, which derived equal credit and strength from the great names of Owen and Howe. The former, who became Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, had, as a Presbyterian, acquired celebrity by writing for the parliament a display of Arminianism; but, on examination, he became an Independent, and advised all who determined not to come to the same conclusion, to beware of investigation. Howe, the most sublime writer of his own, or perhaps any other day, was already an Independent when appointed chaplain to the Protector.

The officers of the army, and many of the soldiers, having adopted the same principles, spread them in their marches through the country; but in Scotland, where they entered as conquerors, they gained no victories for Independency. "Booted apostles" suited Mahomet, and secured the triumphs of the Koran; but the Captain of our salvation has said, "put up thy sword; for all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword." Even when it hangs quietly in its sheath, the arguments of the polemic who wears it become blunt, in proportion as his sword is known to be sharp. Scotland, however, was left by the victors in quiet possession of its beloved Presbytery; for they must have been grossly recreant to their own

principles if they had forced them upon others. After a hundred and fifty years, Independency was introduced by the legitimate arms of evidence. George Moir, of Aberdeen, was, by reading Lord Chancellor King's Enquiry into the Constitution of the Primitive Church, convinced that the first churches were, by the Apostles, made independent of each other; and, seeing the deplorable effects of the Presbyterian establishment at that time, he joined with a small band to erect a building for the worship of an Independent Church. The writer of this sketch opened it, in 1797; and, from nine members, they have multiplied to hundreds. Dr. Philip, of the Cape of Good Hope, the liberator of the Hottentots, was one of their pastors. There are now between one and two hundred of these churches, who have reckoned among their pastors a Greville Ewing and a Ralph Wardlaw; and the Congregational Union for the diffusion of the Gospel in Scotland has been pronounced, by men of other communions, the most useful body which that country contains.

The Restoration woke the Presbyterians of England from the dream of domination over other men's consciences; and this, which was the larger sect, has, among us, withered away under the blight of heterodoxy; while the Independent churches have increased to thousands, who have had the happiness of seeing their ancient antagonists adopt the principles of

religious liberty which they once denounced ; many of them even contending that though their system, unlike Independency, is capable of being established by the state, this would be as contrary to the design of Christ as it would prove injurious to the best interests of mankind.

From this introduction we now turn to the history of the Independent Church which once assembled in Silver Street.

Philip Nye, A.M. was the first minister, when the church was formed during the Protectorate, but assembled in a different part of London. He was born about the year 1596, and entered as a commoner of Brazen Nose College, Oxford ; though he removed to Magdalen Hall, to enjoy the ministry of a Puritan. Having proceeded A.M. in 1622, and taken orders, he preached at St. Michael's, Cornhill, till, fleeing from Laud's persecutions, he officiated at Arnheim, in Guelderland, down to the year 1640. On his return, he became minister of Kimbolton ; but was, in 1643, appointed, with Stephen Marshall, whose daughter he had married, to accompany the Parliament's commissioners to Scotland. He was afterwards presented to the Rectory of Acton ; but, though forward in taking the Covenant, and drawing up the Directory which was to supersede the Common Prayer, when the assembly prepared to *enforce* the Presbyterian discipline, he became con-

spicuous as one of the dissenting brethren, or Independents.

The increase of their body having overcome the influence of the Presbyterians, the congregationalists obtained permission to hold, at the Savoy, in 1658, an assembly, in which the majority were what are called laymen. Though Dr. Owen drew up the declaration of their faith and order, Philip Nye took the lead in the synod. At the Restoration, he was deprived of his living, and thrown, with a family, on the voluntary contributions of his flock, of which he was called the teacher, and John Loader, who had been ejected from the same place, the pastor.

1674.—Thos. Cole, A.M. succeeded. Having been educated at Westminster School, he entered at Christ Church, Oxford, and became, in 1656, tutor and principal of St. Mary's Hall. In addition to many eminent divines, he educated the celebrated John Locke, a name more dear to liberty and philosophy than to theology, on which he tried his powers. At the Restoration, Mr. Cole retired to Nettlebed, where Samuel, the father of the famous John Wesley, was his pupil. Called to succeed Mr. Nye, he was publicly set apart on the 7th of February, 1674, when Dr. Owen, and other independent ministers, officiated. Mr. Cole was a distinguished opponent to what was termed

Neonomianism, or the opinion that Christ's redemption procured the introduction of a new and easier law, by obedience to which we are justified. The opposite doctrine, of justification by the righteousness of Christ alone, imputed to us, and received by faith, gave to our divine such peace in death, that he said to a friend, "You are come to hear my last dying groans; but know, when you hear them, that it is the sweetest breath I ever drew since I knew Christ." He departed on the 16th of September, 1697, in his seventieth year.

This champion for "the faith once delivered to the saints," gives occasion to observe, how superior are the appointments of heaven to all the calculations of men. Nothing can be more plausible than the common objection to Independency—that, if all the churches be left to think and act for themselves, bound by no authoritative confessions or creeds, they will run into every variety of error. To this theoretical conclusion we oppose the testimony of fact. No communion has been, through many ages, so steady in its attachment to the ancient faith, or can boast so perfect a uniformity among thousands of congregations, as that which has been supposed most liable to the inroads of error and the alienations of theological debate. Mr. Cole stood firm against the specious commencements of apostacy from that truth which is still dear to our churches, as in the days of Owen and Howe; and several Pres-

byterian congregations, perceiving the tendencies of the ministers to depart from their own creed, became independent, that they might remain orthodox. Liberty was discovered to be the best safeguard to truth.

1698.—'The next pastor was John Singleton, A.M. He was nephew to Dr. Owen, and became a student at Christ Church, Oxford; but having been removed by Charles's commissioners, he went to Holland, and studied medicine; so that he was called Dr. Singleton, though he merely gave advice to friends. On his return to England, he lived in the family of Lady Scot, and preached in the neighbouring town of Hertford. At the death of Mr. Cole, whom he had assisted, he was ordained pastor of the church, in March 1698. His learning led to his appointment as tutor in the seminary for the ministry, that was situated, first in Hoxton Square, and then in Islington. He died on the 18th of February, 1705-6.

1705.—Daniel Neale, A.M., the well-known historian of the Puritans, began his ministry as assistant to Dr. Singleton, and, on his death, succeeded to the pastoral office, which he held thirty-six years. His usefulness was so great that the church was obliged to remove to a larger place in Jewin Street. He was one of the earliest advocates of inoculation for the small-pox, which, in a private interview, he

recommended to the royal family. Mr. Neale married the sister of the celebrated Dr. Nathaniel Lardner, and was assisted in his ministry by Mr. Lister, one of the earliest students of Dr. Doddridge. He died on the 4th of April, 1743, in the sixty-fifth year of his age.

1743.—Roger Pickering, A.M. F.R.S., was educated at one of our universities, for the establishment; but, on becoming an Independent, he joined the church in Carey Street, under the ministry of Mr. Thomas Bradbury. Chosen to succeed the historian of the Puritans, Mr. Pickering was set apart to the pastoral office, on the 12th of August, 1743. In the following year, he was elected Fellow of the Royal Society, and published several papers in the Philosophical Transactions. He was a most popular lecturer at Salter's Hall, where he was succeeded by Dr. Philip Furneaux.

It was while Mr. Pickering was pastor that the Independent Church removed to Silver Street; for on the death of Mr. Bures, who has been mentioned as the last minister of the Presbyterian congregation, his flock invited Mr. Pickering, who removed to Silver Street with the greater part of his charge. This may appear strange; but we have seen that the two denominations, though at first hostile, afterwards so coalesced that Mr. Howe, an avowed Independent, was pastor of the Presbyterians,

whose descendants now adopted the Independent discipline.

Mr. Pickering was, however, more popular than prudent; for his philosophical pursuits involved him in expensive habits, and, perhaps, also led him into the incongruous speculations of a distillery, in which he failed. He, therefore, resigned the ministry in disgrace and depression, and died on the 18th of May, 1757.

1752.—Mr. Samuel Hayward was a man of another order. Having been an eminently useful country pastor, at Saffron Walden, Potter's Pury, and Poole, in Dorsetshire, he removed, in 1752, to Silver Street. He engaged with Mr. Pike in a casuistical lecture, at Little St. Helen's, which led to a publication well known among dissenters by the title of Pike and Hayward's Cases of Conscience. Great importance was formerly attached to nice determinations of the exact bounds which separate the lawful from the unlawful; but we have no reason to regret the passing away of that fashion. Sin and duty are so often determined by delicate circumstances, known only to God and the moral agent himself, that a tender and enlightened conscience is the best casuist. He that lives in communion with God, devoted to His glory, "has an unction from the Holy One, and knows all things;" for God has said, "the meek will He guide in judgment." Mr.

Hayward having lived much in little time, died, in the thirty-ninth year of his age, on the 23d of July, 1757. His funeral sermon was preached by the venerable Mr. Brewer, of Stepney, to a deeply afflicted congregation, on the words of Job, "Have pity upon me, oh ye my friends ; for the hand of God hath touched me."

1758.—Mr. John Chater, who had removed from the Isle of Wight, was publicly recognized as pastor at Silver Street, on the 29th of June, 1758. About seven years after, Sandeman's Letters on Hervey's Theron and Aspasio having excited attention, Mr. Chater became what is called a Sandemanian, and attempted to remodel the church ; which ended in his removal, in 1765. He was not chargeable, as some, with coming in under false colours ; nor is it known that he took an unfair advantage of the office he had acquired while holding other sentiments, to turn all things into a new channel ; though the conflict that arose might excite suspicion of such an attempt.

1767.—Jacob Dalton, who had been educated under Dr. Conder, at Mile End, held the pastoral office from June 1767 to the end of 1769, when he removed to Coventry.

1770.—In the spring of the following year, William Smith, A.M., of Edinburgh, came to

Silver Street. As he kept a boarding-school at Camberwell, he built a place of worship near his own house, where he preached on one part of the Lord's day.

David Bogue, A.M., a licentiate of the Church of Scotland, became assistant to Mr. Smith, and morning preacher at Silver Street, from 1774, till he removed to Gosport, three years after. Of this venerable man it is not necessary to say more, as his life has been published by the author of this sketch, who studied under him at Gosport. The historian of the dissenting churches of London, says, "For many years past, Mr. Bogue has supported a respectable seminary in the same town, and has supplied many destitute churches with able ministers. His abilities as a tutor pointed him out some years ago to the London Missionary Society, as a proper person to superintend the education of such young men as they employ in the work of missions. Of this society he is an active member, and has printed two sermons preached at their annual meetings. He has likewise published several other single sermons preached upon public occasions. Besides these, Mr. Bogue has published, 'An Essay on the Divine Authority of the New Testament,' which has passed to a second edition; and he is now carrying through the press, in conjunction with the Rev. James Bennett, of Rumsey, a much larger work. This is 'A History of

Dissenters from the Revolution of 1688, to the year 1808,' to be completed in four volumes, two of which are already published." Dr. Bogue, who has been called the father of the Missionary Society, died at the meeting of an auxiliary to that society, at Brighton, on the 25th of October, 1825, aged seventy-five.

In the neighbouring congregation, at Monkwell Street, when the celebrated orator, Dr. Fordyce, attracted a large and fashionable audience, his colleague, Mr. Toller, withdrew to Silver Street, and took Mr. Bogue's place. The scene, however, was soon reversed, for Dr. Fordyce retired, and the congregation eventually removed from Silver Street to Monkwell Street; after which, Mr. Smith confined his ministry to Camberwell, and Mr. Toller also withdrew. In a volume of Sermons, published by the latter, there is a funeral discourse for Peter Wilson, Esq. of Gray's Inn, a pious man, who died at the age of twenty-eight; and it is dated Silver Street, July 2, 1786. Down to this time, therefore, Mr. Toller appears to have preached there. His printed sermons are orthodox and sensible, but cold. He was the uncle of the celebrated minister at Kettering, of whom Mr. Robert Hall said, there was but one reason why any other man than Mr. Toller should preach, and that was because all the world could not hear Mr. Toller.

1789.—Thomas Wills, A.B., a minister of

the establishment, had for some time preached at Silver Street, on Thursday evenings. He had entered into the connexion of the celebrated Countess of Huntingdon, into whose family he married; but quitting that connexion, he took a lease of Silver Street Chapel, as it was afterwards called, for twenty years. He introduced the Liturgy, and an organ, to which he had been accustomed; and having caught much of the spirit of Whitfield, he preached in the open air, especially on Tower Hill, and greatly enlarged the congregation. But the infirmities of age coming upon him, and a preacher of Antinomian celebrity, at Monkwell Street, having drawn away some of his hearers, this venerable minister retired to Cornwall, where he died.

1800.—Mr. Robert Caldwell, who also had been a minister in the Countess of Huntingdon's connexion, at Dover, followed Mr. Wills. The fine talents of the new preacher gave promise of great success, but he was, in three years, removed by death.

1803.—Evan John Jones was then ordained to the ministry at Silver Street Chapel, which he much enlarged. He had been an occasional preacher at the Tabernacle, in Moorfields, and, as he was a man of energy and zeal, he gave himself ardently to the promotion of Sabbath schools, which were beginning to attract the at-

tention of the churches of Christ. The fruits of his zeal in this cause still remain, in a school which has been a blessing to many.

Mr. Jones has been censured as a pluralist, because he held also Islington Chapel, which he rebuilt: but this double charge owed its origin to Mr. Wills, who, having come from the establishment, and from Lady Huntingdon's connexion, had no idea of the unlawfulness of such pluralities. That they were a gainful speculation, has been too hastily assumed; for the divided attention of one pastor prevents the prosperity of two flocks. Mr. Jones died March 27, 1828, aged fifty-six.

James Bennett, D.D., took the charge of the congregation in Silver Street, in November, 1828. The care of the College and the congregation at Rotherham having become too much for his health, he acceded to the invitation to restore the worship and discipline of the Independents, which have now held their former seat about fourteen years. During this time, an event occurred which has been recorded in the following terms:—"Mr. Robert Taylor, who had been a minister in the establishment, having become a lecturer in behalf of infidelity, boasted that he had challenged all the ministers of religion to contest the claims of divine revelation, and that they all refused to take up the glove, conscious that they were deceiving mankind. The author of this volume, deeming it

a duty to make such boasting void, gave notice of a course of lectures, at Silver Street Chapel, on the Lord's day evening, on the internal evidences of revelation, and on Thursday evening, on the external; after which any one would be at liberty to question the lecturer on the subject of the preceding discourse. Mr. Taylor, perceiving for whom this was intended, gave notice of his intention to accept the challenge. He came; and, after the lecture, a chairman was appointed, and a debate was held on 'The Impossibility of Imposture in the Miracles recorded in Scripture.'

"The fame of the first contest drew immense crowds to the second, which was on 'The Jews as Living Witnesses to the Truth of Revelation.' The debate was now more animated and protracted than before; and was chiefly remarkable for an assertion, hazarded by Mr. Taylor, that the Jews never were a nation, and are not even asserted to have been one by the Scriptures; which was met by an appeal to Tacitus, and to a text in the Acts of the Apostles, 'After many years I came to bring alms to my nation.'

"The third evening, the crowd was so overwhelming, and so great was the chagrin of the infidels at the figure which their champion made, that they raised a disorderly clamour, which rendered it necessary to dissolve the assembly, without proceeding to the debate. Against the next evening, provision was made

to prevent a repetition of the riot, by putting up bars to keep off the pressure of the crowd, and procuring a strong body of the City police. But Mr. Taylor declined to appear; though one of his adherents made a faint attempt to keep up the debate. The course of lectures was finished and published, with the debates that followed on the delivery of each one, under the title of ‘An Antidote to Infidelity.’

“The efforts of the infidel party, soon after, ceased. Mr. Taylor was, indeed, imprisoned, at the suit of the Society for the Suppression of Vice, for making a mock exhibition of the Lord’s Supper. His antagonist, at Silver Street, applied to the Secretary of State; and Mr. Taylor being liberated, not long after, quitted this country for the Continent*.”

It may also gratify the curious in dissenting history, to be informed that the ancient Meeting House, in Monkwell Street, was occupied by the Silver Street Sunday School Society, from the year 1825 to 1831, when it was taken down, and the school-rooms now occupied by that institution were built on the site. In the year 1840, the pulling down of party walls compelled the congregation to remove from Silver Street to the Institution in Aldersgate-Street; and as this disarrangement was pro-

* History of the Dissenters during the last thirty years; being a Continuation of the History, by David Bogue and James Bennett, p. 231, 2, 3.

tracted, and the ancient building permanently injured, it was finally determined not to renew the expiring lease, but to build. A suitable site having been procured in Falcon Square, abutting on their School Rooms, a few persons of the congregation met, and subscribed twelve hundred pounds towards the purchase. The congregation was informed, in the morning of the Lord's day, of what was intended, and being requested to bring, in the evening, a statement of what they would contribute, they did so, and the object was accomplished. They have, since then, been engaged in raising the further sum necessary for the building, into which they are to enter, in September 1842.

Before, however, we close the history of Silver Street Chapel, we shall present to the reader the memoirs of two distinguished men who worshipped in that place; one a minister of the flock, the other an eminent member.

John Howe, A.M., appeared in the list of Presbyterian ministers; but as he was an Independent in sentiment, and worthy of special notice, he has been reserved for this place. From Loughborough, where he was born, in 1630, he was taken over to Ireland by his father, who had been driven from his living by Laud. Having entered early at Cambridge, and taken his first degree, Mr. Howe removed to Oxford, where he commenced Master of Arts, and was elected Fellow of Magdalen College.

He was ordained by Mr. Herle, of Winwick, assisted by the ministers of the chapels in that extensive parish, and began his ministry at Great Torrington, in Devonshire, as successor to Mr. Lewis Stukely, a celebrated Independent divine*. Business having called him to London, Mr. Howe went, at the end of his intended stay, to Whitehall Chapel, while Oliver Cromwell was Protector, whose keen eye marked him out as a country minister of no ordinary character. He was called to preach there, the next week, and to repeat the engagement, till Cromwell insisted on his exchanging the pastorate at Torrington for the chaplainship at Whitehall, to which he removed his family, and where some of his children were born. He became a celebrated lecturer at St. Margaret's, Westminster.

He employed his powerful influence in behalf of the most deserving of the Episcopalians, with whom he had formed friendships that survived the numerous changes of those times; and, on one occasion, the Protector said to him, "Mr. Howe, you have often asked favours for

* While at Torrington, Mr. Howe married, on the 1st of March, 1654, the daughter of Mr. George Hughes, an influential minister of Plymouth, with whom he held a weekly correspondence in Latin. A letter from Mr. Hughes, containing these words, "Sit ros coeli super habitaculum vestrum, —may the dew of heaven be on your dwelling," was received by Mr. Howe, on the same day that a fire which had broken out in his residence was quenched by a shower of rain.

others ; I should like to know when you mean to ask something for yourself."

He gave, however, a striking proof that his fidelity was equal to his benevolence ; for when one of the chaplains at Whitehall had preached in support of what was called a particular faith in prayer, Mr. Howe deemed it his duty to shew its fallacy. For faith consists in believing what God has said, not in trusting the impressions of our own minds, or expecting the accomplishment of the particular wishes of our hearts. The Protector is said to have heard attentively, to have occasionally frowned, but to have expressed no offence at this opposition to what was deemed a favourite notion of his own.

Mr. Howe continued to be chaplain, after Oliver Cromwell's death, but shortly returned to his charge at Torrington. At the passing of the Act of Uniformity, though many expected that he who had proved himself so liberal would conform, he declared that his liberality compelled him to dissent from a compulsory uniformity. He was now persecuted, and for a time imprisoned for preaching in private ; and at length, having an increasing family, with a small income, he accepted the invitation of Lord Mazarene to go with him to Ireland, as his chaplain. Being detained on the Welch coast, he preached in the parish church a sermon on Love to God, which is in print, and well accounts for the floods of tears which it produced. In Ireland, uniformity was

less severely enforced, and Mr. Howe, while at Antrim, preached in the parochial pulpit, the Archbishop declaring, in a meeting of the clergy, that he would have Mr. Howe admitted into every pulpit.

On the death of Dr. Seaman, 1675, Mr. Howe was invited to succeed him at Silver Street, where he had a very distinguished auditory, and lived in friendship with the most eminent divines of the establishment. But it may be asked, how an Independent could become pastor to a Presbyterian congregation? He so strongly objected to exclusive principles on church government, that while he was studying at Oxford, he was asked why he did not join the Independent Church at College, under the pastoral care of Dr. Thomas Goodwin? He replied, "You make too much of your peculiar order; but if you will admit me, on catholic principles, as a Christian, I will join you." They proved more liberal than he imagined, for they admitted him on these terms. But when Mr. Howe took the pastoral charge of the Presbyterians in Silver Street, they had become virtually Independents; for they chose him without foreign control, and the members seem to have been admitted on a profession of faith, which are the two vital principles of Independency.

But persecution recommencing in great fury, the ministry of the Dissenters was suspended, and when Lord William Russel was sacrificed

to the Popish bigotry and despotism of James, Mr. Howe wrote to the widowed lady a beautiful letter of condolence, which is on record, and which produced further correspondence. Mr. Howe now accepted an invitation from Lord Wharton, to travel with him on the Continent, which led to the settlement of our divine at Utrecht, where he preached to the English Church, along with Mr. Mead, with whom, also, Dr. Gilbert Burnet, afterwards Bishop of Sarum, occasionally ministered.

King James's declaration for liberty of conscience having induced Mr. Howe's flock to request his return, he previously conferred with William, Prince of Orange, who had married the daughter of James. The King took an early opportunity to see Mr. Howe, to induce him to encourage addresses to the throne; but he frankly declared, that, though as a minister of Christ, he would avail himself of every opportunity to preach, he would not meddle with political affairs. After the Revolution, he addressed William at the head of the dissenting ministry of London. In the controversies which subsequently arose, he took the side of peace and charity, uniting with Dr. Williams, Dr. Bates, and Mr. Alsop, in the Lecture at Salters' Hall.

Worn out with labours and trials, and having nearly completed his seventy-fifth year, he died on the 2d of April, 1705. He was visited, in his last illness, by many distinguished persons,

and, among the rest, by Richard Cromwell, whose political innocence was rewarded by the safety of his old age. Mr. Howe's conversation had long been in heaven; and as he drew near to that state, he said to his wife, "Though I love you as well as one creature ought to love another, if it were put to my choice, whether to live with you seven years longer or die immediately, I would say, 'die this night.'"

To his works, published by Dr. Calamy, in two folio volumes, the Rev. Mr. Hunt has added, in a second edition, many valuable productions which had remained in manuscript in Dr. Williams's library; among which are some highly characteristic and instructive Lectures, delivered in Silver Street. Mr. Child has printed a third edition, in one volume.

The person of Mr. Howe was singularly commanding and graceful, and his portrait exhibits the *os divinum* of the poet, which reminds us of "the mouth that spake excellent things." Sublimity was the characteristic of his mind, but the style of his more finished productions was over-wrought, even to obscurity, which forms a singular contrast with the lucid simplicity that surprises and delights us in those discourses that were taken down from his own lips. From these, an inquirer might learn what is the *beau ideal* of extemporary preaching; for Mr. Howe delivered, without notes, the careful studies of a well-furnished mind,

warm with the emotions of a devotional heart. His grand work, "The Living Temple," designed to shew that the soul of a Christian is the temple of God, contains the finest philosophical defence of natural theology against Spinosæ, and the most profound view of revealed truth, in opposition to the errors that have infected the Church. "The Blessedness of the Righteous," and the treatise on "Delighting in God," are less philosophical, but scarcely less profound; though addressed, not so much to the intellect, as to the heart. His "Lectures on the First Principles of the Oracles of God," delivered at Silver Street, convey the happiest sketch of Christian theology, in that beautiful simplicity which constitutes the highest excellence of style. What Milton was among the poets, that was Howe among the divines; though his platonism, which he is said to have caught from Henry Moore, renders his theology less purely scriptural than that of his celebrated contemporary, Owen. Dr Watts closed his Elegy on the Death of Howe, with this address to heaven:—

" O send us down a soul of equal size,
Or burn this worthless world, and take us to the skies."

Sir Thomas Abney, a Christian patriot, was heir to higher honours than if the blood of all the Howards had flowed in his veins; but he was also descended from one of those families which heralds pronounce ancient and honour-

able. Wilsley, in the county of Derby, the family seat for five hundred years, was the place of his birth, in January 1639. Early deprived of his mother, he was committed, by his father, to the care of a pious aunt, Lady Bromley, who was honoured to produce those religious impressions which rendered him afterwards a blessing to the realm. In early life, he thought it his glory to be a Puritan, and, having adopted the sentiments of the Independents, he joined the Church in Silver Street, of which Dr. Jacomb, and, after him, Mr. Howe, was pastor. He first married the daughter of the celebrated Caryl, and, on her death, he became, in the year 1700, the son-in-law of Mr. John Gunston, of Stoke Newington, whose memory the muse of Watts has forbidden to die. The name of Abney also has been handed down to posterity by means of its connexion with that of Watts, who found in the house of Sir Thomas and his descendants, an asylum, for thirty-six years.

Though decidedly devoted to an unfashionable religion, he rose to the highest civic honours, for he was chosen, in 1693, sheriff of London and Middlesex, and, before the expiration of his year, alderman of Vintry Ward. He received from King William the honour of knighthood, and in 1710, some years before the usual term, he was elected Lord Mayor, when his conduct gave occasion to the assertion, that

“the house of Hanover owes the throne of Britain to a dissenter;” for, in opposition to a majority of the aldermen, he had the courage to propose an address from the Common Council to King William, assuring him of their determination to stand by him against the Pretender, whom the French king had lately proclaimed sovereign of Great Britain. His boldness and prudence having triumphed in the city, the address not only encouraged the king, to whom it was presented while he was with the army on the Continent, but gave the tone of loyalty to the nation, which re-echoed the language of the metropolis from Caithness to the Land’s End. The King dissolved the Parliament at this favourable moment, and Sir Thomas Abney was chosen member for London, of that legislature which passed the act for the abjuration of the Pretender, and the further establishment of the Protestant succession. The bill, which received the royal assent the day before King William died, was the means of securing the throne to the house of Brunswick. A person of distinction, complimenting this dissenting Lord Mayor, on his zeal and address in the critical affair, said, “You have done the King more service than if you had raised him half a million of money.”

That the dignities to which he was exalted, and the popularity he acquired, did not seduce his heart from a due regard to “the honour

which comes from above," may be shewn by an anecdote, which will have a very different effect on the Christian, and the man of the world. In the evening of the day on which he entered upon his mayoralty, he withdrew silently from the assembly, went to his own house, performed the usual family worship, and then returned to the company. He probably recalled an example which may already have occurred to the reader—that of David, who returned from a royal procession, on a national feast, "to bless his household." Sir Thomas Abney lived to be father of the city of London, which received at least as much honour from the wisdom, patriotism, and piety of its father, as it conferred on him by its population, talents, commerce, or wealth. This distinguished ornament of the metropolis, the senate, and the Church of God, lived to the good old age of eighty-three, and departed to higher honours, on the 6th of February, 1722.

On the 17th of May, 1842, at twelve o'clock, the foundation stone of the Falcon Square Chapel, for the use of the congregation which had worshipped in Silver Street, was laid by the pastor, Dr. Bennett, assisted by other ministers. The Rev. E. Muscut, of St. Neot's, read the 87th Psalm, in Dr. Watts's version, which was sung by the assembly, for whose accommodation a tent had been provided.

“ God in his earthly temple lays
 Foundations for his heavenly praise ;
 He likes the tents of Jacob well,
 But still in Sion loves to dwell.

“ His mercy visits every house
 That pay their night and morning vows ;
 But makes a more delightful stay
 Where churches meet to praise and pray.”

The Rev. Thomas James, of Woolwich, then offered up prayer for the divine blessing on the undertaking ; after which was lowered the stone, containing the following inscription :—

FALCON SQUARE CHAPEL.

THIS FOUNDATION STONE WAS LAID

17 MAY, 1842,

BY

JAS. BENNETT, D.D.

A. DUNCAN, ESQ. TREASURER.

J. TARRING, ESQ. ARCHITECT.

Dr. Bennett having gone through the usual form of laying the stone, standing upon it delivered the following address :—

“ Should any now ask, as God encouraged the children of his people to do, “ what mean ye by the service which ye have just performed ? ” I answer—“ we have this day laid the foundation for a building consecrated to the worship of God and the preaching of the glorious gospel of Christ.” Whoever, then, has read the Scriptures with understanding, and felt the force of their grand theme, must have called to re-

membrance the proclamation of eternal mercy : —“ Thus saith the Lord ; behold, I lay in Zion, for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation : he that believeth shall not make haste.”—(Isaiah, xxviii. 16.) As “ other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ ;” should not the hand which laid the stone be pressed upon the heart which moved that hand ? should not the hand of each one who saw this stone laid, be applied to a heart throbbing with the anxious inquiry, “ Have I built my eternal hopes on this foundation ?” Have we a claim to those inspired words which Peter addressed to the Church of Christ—“ to him coming, as to a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious ; ye, also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ ?” For, “ on this rock (says the Saviour) I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”—“ Whosoever stumbles at this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.”

Join, all ye that rest upon this rock, to send to heaven the request that the house of prayer now founded may echo with that name of Jesus, of which eternal truth has said, “ neither is there salvation in any other.” Never may the prophet’s words apply to this building—“ the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam

of the timber shall answer to it," in reproaches on them that occupy it; saying, "the house built for the preaching of salvation through Christ, ye have perverted unto 'another gospel, which is not another;' and now call it 'Ichabod,' for where is the glory?" But when the footstep of the descending Judge shall shake the earth, and hurl all its mightiest edifices into chaos, may the very ruins of this house become vocal, to testify that here were ever heard "words whereby men might be saved!" Here may many of those,

"Who unconcern'd shall o'er the ruins smile,
And light their torch at Nature's funeral pile,"

exclaim, "I was born of God there." Now may Jehovah say, "Arise and build, and I will be with you, and fill this house with my glory, and the glory of the latter house shall be greater than the former."

For this day we remember, with no ordinary emotions, the adjoining building from which we came, and where the Church of Christ had worshipped for nearly two hundred years. It was not our own; for, like Paul, it was said of him who ministered there, "he preached in his hired house." But why hire, when they had among them some of the rich and great, and the Lord Mayor of this opulent city, who could have erected an edifice far beyond *our* means? Why are we now, for the first time, building for ourselves, or rather for our Lord and his

Church? Persecution was the cause of their inferior state. Liberty gives us our superiority. When that church, of which we may consider ourselves a continuation, was first gathered, and for many years after, their dissent was considered a civil offence, and such a society could have no legal hold on property. Individuals, therefore, held the building; for if private property had been assailed, every man would have been alarmed for his own. But though it is probable that some member of the church was, at first, the proprietor, the house of prayer afterwards came, by the course of events, into the hands of strangers.

Now, however, we enjoy a legal as well as a scriptural existence, and can sustain our right to our house of assemblies, by the laws of our country, as well as by the authority of our God; for "other men laboured, and we have entered into their labours." Our forefathers, the first Independents, introduced (shall I not say restored?) the principle of religious liberty, at the price of their own civil liberties, their property, and their blood. We this day enjoy the inestimable benefit. They went back to the fountain head, and took the apostolic as the truly primitive pattern for their ecclesiastical polity, and there found the liberty which had for ages been lost. Each congregation of the faithful being, by the inspired founders, constituted a complete church, independent of the authority of other societies, or ministers; the

essence of the constitution of each one gave liberty to all. But as that domination over the consciences of Christ's free men, which is the characteristic of antichrist, had quenched the love and the very idea of religious liberty, it was, when evoked from the slumber of centuries, denounced as the great Diana of the Independents. The glorious Revolution of 1688, and its first (not ripe) fruits, the Toleration Act, declared that the long-abused principle was just in the sight of God, and essential to peace among men. The accession of the House of Hanover has secured to us this our sacred birth-right, for the sake of which civil liberty itself is to us most dear. Under the auspices of a Queen who has proved herself to be the heiress to the generous principles which seated her ancestors on the British throne, we rear this house of prayer, in which, at the just command of the Eternal King, we shall say from the heart, "O Lord, save Queen Victoria, and give thy righteousness to the Queen's son."

And now, why are not the young alone rejoicing, as at the building of the second temple, delighted with the foundation of the new house of prayer? Why are not the elders, as on that day, in tears; because this house is nothing to the former? Why have we marked out a larger foundation than our ancestors thought it prudent to lay?—Because our God has so multiplied us, after the oppression of ages, that our communicants at the Lord's Supper could

scarcely have been accommodated in the building first erected in Silver Street; and the children of our Sabbath Schools would require more space than was then provided for those of every age. The five Independents, called the dissenting brethren, in the Westminster Assembly, have not only had their successors, who have gone on increasing till their churches are reckoned by thousands, but, in some instances, a single one is equivalent to several of those which were founded amidst the tempests of ancient days.

What obligations are laid upon us by the enjoyment of liberty bought at such a price, and of prosperity so undeserved! Should we not remember that the voice of our God has said, “I will bless you, and *you shall be a blessing?* The remnant of Israel shall be as a dew from the Lord, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men.” To pierce the thick darkness of the masses around us with the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, should be our constant aim; nor should we be content without sharing in that which is the glory of our land — the diffusion of the blessings of Christ’s religion to earth’s remotest bounds. To reach this “mark and prize of our high calling,” our own religion must be nourished up in the house we have now founded, to all the glorious eminence of the Church’s happiest days; and the supplications we there offer

must be "the effectual fervent prayers of the righteous, which prevail much."

"For my house, saith the Lord, shall be called the house of prayer for all people." "He never said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain;" but Christ has declared, "wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them; and if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my father who is in heaven." Knowing, then, that though "heaven and earth shall pass away, Christ's words shall never pass away, till all be fulfilled;" we rear this building, assured of his presence, which is "the beauty and glory of the Sanctuary." We shall see him "walking amidst the golden candlesticks with eyes of fire," and hear him say, "All the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins." He will "sanctify and cleanse us by the washing of water by the word, that he may present us to himself, a glorious church, without spot or blemish, or any such thing." Having made us "more than conquerors" over the world and sin and death, he will translate us to "the general assembly and church of the first born that are written in heaven." But the church, united to an immortal head, cannot die. Instead of the fathers, he will raise up the children, who shall say, "Thou art my father's God, and thou shalt be

my own God, in an everlasting covenant that shall never be forgotten." If the offspring fail, or, like Esau, despise, for a morsel of meat, their heavenly birthright; he who has the key of hearts, and "openeth, and no man shutteth," will "take the children of strangers, and give them a name and a place within his house, better than of sons and of daughters." "For other sheep I have," saith the shepherd and bishop of souls, "who are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth. There shall be a handful of corn on the top of the mountains, the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon, and they of this city shall flourish like grass of the earth. His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory, Amen and Amen. The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended."

The Rev. John Adey, son-in-law to Mr. Jones, the former minister at Silver Street, then led the devotion by repeating the 118th Psalm, according to Dr. Watts's version, which was sung by the assembly.

- “ See what a living stone
The builders did refuse ;
Yet God hath built his church thereon
In spite of envious Jews.
- “ The scribe and angry priest
Reject thine only Son ;
Yet on this rock shall Sion rest
As the chief corner-stone.
- “ Hosanna to the King
Of David’s royal blood :
Bless him, ye saints ; he comes to bring
Salvation from your God.
- “ We bless thine holy word,
Which all this grace displays ;
And offer on thine altar, Lord,
Our sacrifice of praise.”

The Rev. Mr. Freeman, formerly minister at Kidderminster, where he may be said to have succeeded Richard Baxter, afterwards missionary in Madagascar, and now minister at Walthamstow, one of the foreign secretaries of the London Missionary Society, closed the service on the ground, with prayer and the benediction.

The assembly then adjourned to the School Rooms adjoining to the site of the new chapel, to take refreshments, when a hymn was sung ; after which was delivered an Epitome of the History of the Church in Silver Street, which is here given in greater detail.

Mr. Freeman afterwards addressed the com-

pany, to express the deep interest he felt in the engagements of that day. For he observed, that his father and mother having joined the congregation at Silver Street, he being then a child, his name was enrolled as the first scholar in the Sabbath School which Mr. Jones at that time formed, and which has since continued to be an eminent blessing to the rising race. Besides Mr. Freeman, several others have issued from this seminary of religious knowledge. The historic sketch having interested and informed him, he complained that he was unable to carry away in his memory all the information that he so much prized, and, therefore, wished it might be printed, for more permanent usefulness. Dr. Bennett having expressed his readiness to undertake the task, provided it might yield fifty pounds towards the erection of the new chapel, Mr. Freeman made a handsome offer towards the object, and others followed; one of the company being a printer, engaged to execute his part of the work without profit.

Mr. James then followed, adverting to some circumstances in that day's proceedings which were to him of peculiar interest. The Treasurer of the building-fund had been a member of his former flock in the City, and had been, for many years, his most tried and valued friend, and the minister who was to officiate in the new chapel had been his pastor, at Romsey, where the speaker had witnessed another

spacious and handsome chapel reared by the liberality of the flock. He observed that he could not wish any thing better for the present company, than that they might enjoy, in the place they were building, such prosperity of religion as he had witnessed in that congregation from which he went forth, from secular pursuits, to study for the ministry, and to preach the gospel of Christ.

The Rev. Samuel Kidd, Professor of Chinese, in University College, London, then addressed the company, on the high superiority of their circumstances beyond those of the people among whom he had laboured, in the Chinese College at Malacca. He repeated, both in Chinese and English, several appropriate maxims of the most numerous and singular empire on earth, upon the importance of a good foundation. He then exhibited the dreary darkness of the wisest of heathen nations, for want of that evangelical light and liberty which we enjoy; but expressed his confident hope, that, in China too, such scenes as this day had witnessed would be enjoyed, and that, where now idol temples filled the land, houses of prayer would be founded; and it would be felt that “this is life eternal, to know the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent.”

Thus closed the services of a day to which many had looked forward through long and trying delays, and from which all returned thank-

ful for a scene of sacred harmony, religious instruction, and animating hope; breathing to heaven the inspired prayer, "O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity." A collection was made towards defraying the expenses of the building, and the cards of admission contained a memorial of the event.

We have rapidly glanced over two hundred years of the history of a church replete with instructive events; but who can anticipate what shall occur in an equal period of time to come? While futurity is hidden from us, we may learn, from the past, what effects we should expect from each cause. When the Christian church had been long supposed to be one unwieldy mass, under the domination of the Pope; or the population of a kingdom under its secular head; it was deemed strange to call a single assembly of believers a church, to which we are now familiarised by thousands of instances, where all the ends for which a church was instituted have been attained. When it was condemned as novel, Owen undertook to prove that Christians knew no other than a congregational church for several centuries; having derived this form from the apostles of Christ. Christianity itself was once a novelty, as true religion always is to him that receives it; for "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, and all things

are become new." Nor had even those who had practically abandoned it, been able to escape the ancient idea; for writers of the Roman and Presbyterian communions, have, with the establishment of this country, defined a church as "a congregation of faithful men, in which the word of God is preached, and its ordinances are duly administered*."

Denounced, at first, as an impracticable theory, the congregational system has stood the test of ages, and has spread its churches, not only over England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, but in America, South Africa, our Indian possessions, Australia, and the Polynesian isles.

The less this system admits of union with the civil state, the more it accords with the celebrated declaration of its Lord—"My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight; but now is my kingdom not from hence." Renouncing all civil force, and knowing no other than voluntary associations, congregational churches are the cure for that foulest of all pests, religious persecution; which has stained Christianity with the odium of a crime once peculiar to its foes—the employment of the soldier's arms, instead of that sword of the spirit which reaches the soul, only to wound, that it may save. The long-lost glories of our benevolent religion

* See article 19 of the Church of England.

will then be restored, when no other churches shall be known but bands of holy brethren, united by force of truth and love.

Without State pay, and even while their own resources are taken to support another communion, scriptural churches have been maintained by the primitive offerings of the faithful, which have also secured the continuance of sacred learning—the knowledge of Scripture in its original tongues. A Henry, a Watts, a Lardner, a Doddridge, a Guyse, and a Gill, have succeeded to our Owens and our Howes, and furnished instruction, not only to our own communion, but to others, though not always acknowledged. Theology, of which Lord Bacon says, “it is the Sabbath and port of all my labours,” has ever flourished among Independent churches, and has been confessed, even by our opponents, to be a science peculiarly our own.

Personal religion, however, is the highest glory of any church. A system of ecclesiastical polity, not instituted for its own sake, becomes pernicious when made more than a means for the preservation of “the doctrine which is according to godliness.” That a church is “a congregation of *faithful* men,” becomes a salutary truth, by leading its members to ask,—Do I, then, bear this character? They who receive another into their communion, on such a profession, are perpetually

reminded, that, if they *possess* not what they *require*, they are self-deceivers, or hypocrites. To entrust to the body of the faithful the choice of its pastor, or bishop, is a better security for a holy ministry than any popular election by indiscriminate masses, or any presentation by a patron or prime minister. To commit the pecuniary affairs of the church to deacons chosen from among themselves, was ordained by the Apostles, that pastors “should give themselves wholly to prayer and the ministry of the word.” By this scriptural order many churches have secured a succession of pious members and faithful ministers, for hundreds of years. Can this be said of any other system?

But as the predicted apostacy proves that even churches formed and regulated by apostles, may depart from their faith and order, we are warned to watch and pray, lest, “having begun in the spirit, we end in the flesh.” We may have the form of godliness without the power, while others, with a less scriptural order, may have more of the spirit of the gospel. Alienation of heart from those who, while they differ from us, prove themselves disciples of Christ, is the worst consequence of the divisions that have arisen in the church. To this, therefore, we should oppose catholic charity—the perfect bond that should unite all in whom is seen the image of Christ; ever listening to the prayer offered by our High Priest, as he

passed within the veil, “ That all my disciples may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”

Ministers and Missionaries

Formerly belonging to

THE SABBATH SCHOOL, SILVER STREET.

THE following ministers and missionaries, with the wives of two others, were scholars or teachers in the Sabbath School, at Silver Street :—

Rev. Jos. John Freeman, Walthamstow.
 Rev. Matthew Freeman, of Cheshire.
 Rev. George Wright, late of Lincolnshire.
 Rev. J. Graves.
 Mr. J. D. Pearson, late Missionary, Chinsurah.
 Mrs. Ellis, Taheite.
 Mrs. Wilson, Taheite.
 Mr. H. E. Taylor, Missionary, Jamaica.
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